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FM AMEMBASSY LJUBLJANA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4564
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 0006
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LJUBLJANA 000096

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DEPT FOR EUR/NCE, G/TIP, AF/E
NSC FOR D. WILSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/10/2016

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SUBJECT: SLOVENIAN DEPUTY FM MOVING THE BILATERAL AGENDA
FORWARD INCLUDING DEMOCRACY PROMOTION

REF: SECSTATE 4746

Classified By: COM Thomas B. Robertson for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. In a recent meeting with COM, Deputy FM Bozo Cerar expressed a strong interest in our Democracy Agenda and how Slovenia might adapt this approach to foreign relations. Cerar's interest led to a deeper discussion of a number of bilateral and multilateral topics. On UN reform, Cerar reported that Slovenia was generally in close agreement with US positions and would be offering its support, though he had doubts as to how fast the UN would be able to move on establishing the Human Rights Council. Cerar confirmed the GOS had reimbursed the trafficking in persons NGO Kljuc for all its services for 2005. He said the GOS was managing the needs of trafficking victims with the assistance of the Catholic charity Caritas until it could finish the tendering process for a new long-term arrangement. COM and Cerar also discussed Slovenian President Drnovsek's Darfur initiative. Cerar said the GOS had earmarked 30.2 million SIT (approximately \$150,000) for use by Slovene NGOs working at Hamdia refugee camp, and he was curious about US views of Drnovsek's activities. Cerar also elaborated on some of Slovenia's civil society building projects closer to home in the Western Balkans, and particularly, Macedonia. Cerar repeated strong GOS interest in a visit to the White House by Prime Minister Janez Jansa some time this spring. End Summary.

Transformational Diplomacy

¶2. (SBU) COM hosted State Secretary (deputy foreign minister equivalent) Bozo Cerar for lunch February 9, 2006. The discussion was wide ranging and covered key points of bilateral and multilateral interest. Cerar expressed particular interest in the Secretary's recent speeches on transformational diplomacy and the US Democracy Agenda. Cerar is overseeing the management of a foreign ministry in transition from representing a small, newly independent state to representing a full member of the European Union, NATO and with growing interest outside its own borders. Coming off the demands of OSCE chairmanship and looking forward to the EU presidency, Cerar said he was interested in how Slovenia might further promote the Democracy Agenda, particularly in the Balkans.. He asked for more information (which Embassy has provided from the new Democracy Dialogues Homepage) which might help him in his own speeches and articles on the subject.

Development Cooperation with Macedonia

13. (SBU) Slovenia and Macedonia have signed a development cooperation agreement, and programs are already underway. The agreement is primarily focused on training of civil servants. An ongoing project is through Slovenia's well-regarded Center of Excellence in Finance (CEF) in Ljubljana which trains civil servants in public finance. The Ministry of Economy is leading a project on small and medium enterprise creation for entrepreneurs and government officials. These two programs and another small one through the Ministry of Agriculture complement Slovenia's twinning project with Macedonia between Ministries of Justice. The justice twinning program is funded primarily through EU Commission funds, however, Slovenia also contributes to it bilaterally. Additionally, the GOS has high hopes for its new Center for European Integration. It is currently putting together an advisory board and former German Foreign Minister Genscher has agreed to join. Cerar said they would like to have a prominent American representative on the board as well. Once up and running, (the GOS has provided initial funding) the idea is to provide a central location for aspiring EU members from the Balkans and further afield to prepare for the EU accession process.

TIP - Getting Back on Track

14. (C) The GOS had a drawn-out public dispute with the NGO Kljuc which the previous government had contracted to perform

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victim protection services. Cerar told the Ambassador that ultimately all 27 million SIT had been paid to Kljuc for services provided in 2005. Somewhat defensively, he said that public information had been very one sided because of Kljuc's vocal and aggressive tactics, and he intimated that the GOS had uncovered some irregularities with how Kljuc was spending GOS funds. He did not elaborate further.

15. (C) Turning the focus to the future and what measures were being taken to ensure the safety and security of potential new victims, the Ambassador asked about current arrangements for victims assistance. Cerar said that the local NGO Caritas, on an interim basis, was handling the care of any new trafficking victims, and that the public tender calling for these services would be ready for publication by the end of the week of February 13. Kljuc will be invited to compete for the contract. Cerar said the GOS was undecided as to whether the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, or the Ministry of the Interior should take the lead of the Government's anti-TIP program. For the next six months, at least, the national coordinator will remain at the Ministry of the Interior. Wrapping up the discussion of TIP, Cerar underscored the GOS' seriousness about dealing with TIP. He mentioned that Slovenia would be putting more resources towards the effort and would, additionally, draw on EU funds to combat trafficking in the future.

Darfur

16. (C) Cerar asked Ambassador what the USG view was of President Drnovsek's Darfur initiative. Ambassador responded that while we were pleased that Drnovsek's ideas, for the most part, tracked our own, our energy and focus was on working through the Abuja process and the UN framework. Cerar said that the GOS was supportive of Drnovsek's efforts and that it would provide about 30.2 million SIT (approx. \$150,000) to Slovene NGOs - UNICEF, Caritas, Together Foundation, the Red Cross - working in the Hamdia refugee camp. (Note: lunch took place before Drnovsek upgraded his

plan from 10 to 16 points and extended his invitation for meetings in Slovenia to the rebel groups as well. End Note.)

Jansa Visit to Washington

¶17. (C) Not unexpectedly, Cerar raised the GOS strong hope that PM Janez Jansa would be able to meet with President Bush sometime this spring. COM explained the difficulty of scheduling White House visits given POTUS' Spring/Summer travel schedule and upcoming congressional elections, but assured Cerar he would continue to push for such a meeting notwithstanding. He said that Jansa was preparing to meet with both German PM Merkel and Russian President Putin this spring, and the absence of a meeting at the White House would be hard to explain to the Slovenian public, particularly given the PM's pro-American pro-NATO agenda.

¶18. In addition to the topics discussed above, COM flagged for Cerar the murky legal foundation currently in place for US citizens wanting to purchase property in Slovenia. He also mentioned the specific denationalization case of Rudolf Hoehn-Saric, an elderly constituent of California Senator Barbara Boxer.

Comment

¶19. (SBU) Cerar was very engaged on all issues raised during lunch. He has been consistently responsive to USG inquiries and requests and appeared genuinely interested in regularizing the issue of trafficking victims protection. Cerar understands and appreciates the USG emphasis on transformational diplomacy and the democracy agenda because this approach and emphasis mirror especially Slovenia's interests in the Balkans.

ROBERTSON